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A
DISCOURSE
Concerning
PENANCE.

Shewing how the
DOCTRINE of it, *J.*
IN THE
CHURCH of ROME,
Makes void
TRUE REPENTANCE.

IMPRIMATUR,
A Discourse concerning Penance, &c.

Aug. 15. 1688.

*Guil. Needham, RR. in Christo
P. ac D.D. Wilhelmo Archiep.
Cant. à Sacr. Domest.*

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A
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THERE is nothing more common amongst those of the Church of *Rome*, than to amplify and set forth the Rigors of Penance, practised in their Communion. 'Tis from this supposal they draw a great many Prejudices against the Protestants, as if the love of Licentiousness had made them shake off a Yoke so troublesome and uneasie to the Flesh. We know also how much they esteem themselves on account of these Severities, as if their Church therein gave a certain Mark of her Zeal and Care for the Salvation of her Children, whom by these Examples she trains up to Holiness. It will be therefore of use for the informing of those who have not attentively considered these matters, and to prevent the Cheat they endeavour to impose on Protestants, to lay open as briefly as may be, these Mysteries, and to make it appear, that these Practices so much boasted of, are vastly remote from the Spirit of Religion.

I will not here insist upon that which is peculiar to some Orders of Men in that Communion, about the matter of Penance; the *Jansenists* have sufficiently performed this in several of their Writings. Neither will I insist on what Father Le



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Moyne hath maintained in his *Manifesto*, p. 46. That the *Propositions of Morality relaxed*, which made so much noise, were writ by the most famous Men of the University of *Paris*: Nor on what *Amadeus Guimenius* hath made out, that what is objected to the *Jesuits* in this matter, is not peculiar to them, and that therefore the *Jansenists* could not censure the Propositions which the *Jesuits* defend about Morality, without challenging the whole Church of *Rome*, whose most famous Divines have defended the same Opinions long time before and since the Reformation. My Design is not to insist on some particular Practice peculiar to some place, but to speak of what is commonly practised and taught by the whole Body of that Communion, and received by their Divines and Canonists, that is, by those whom that Church acknowledges for her Doctors and Directors.

I shall bound my self in this Discourse to speak chiefly of Six Articles which concern the Acts of Penance, and which evidently shew that the Church of *Rome* hath made of that Duty a meer Phantasm, which can be of no use to the Salvation of Christians. The 1st respects the abolition of the Penance of the Ancients, as to the outward acts of it. The 2^d respects the Abolition of Penance, as to its Internals. The 3^d the Practice of Indulgences. The 4th concerns the Right that Penitents have to reject the Penances imposed on them by their Confessors. The 5th respects that Power a Sinner hath to make Satisfaction by means of a Third, upon whom he dischargeth the care of performing the Penance he does accept of. The 6th concerns the nature of these Satisfactions for Sins, to which all the *Romish* Piety may be reduced.

It can't be denied, that the Church of old made use of great severities with regard to Sinners that were guilty of enormous Crimes; her excluding at first from her Communion for ever those that were guilty of Idolatry, Adultery, and Murther, doth evidence that she was minded to inspire Sinners with the greatest Horror and Aversion for such Crimes

as these; and afterwards her admitting Sinners guilty of such Enormities only to receive her Peace, and the Tokens of her Communion, at the hour of death, is a sufficient evidence that by this severity she was minded to keep off those that were not sufficiently touched with the horror of these sins. We know also what Austerities, Punishments and Mortifications she prescribed to those who were desirous to partake of this Grace; and that without a continued exercise for many years of acts of Penance, all hope of Reconciliation was taken away from such gross sinners. The sinner was obliged to appear before the Church in a mourning Habit, covered with Ashes, and wearing an Hair Cloth; in this posture he was to prostrate himself at the feet of the Congregation with tears and groans, conjuring them, with their prayers, to entreat the favour of God for him; afterwards by the earnest application of the Assembly to the Bishop in his behalf, he was admitted to do Penance, he was obliged to humble himself under the hand of the Bishop, to obtain his prayers and blessing during his penitential Course; he was for a long time according to the nature of his sins, excluded from the Communion of Believers, and to continue for some years in the Condition of the *Catechumeni*, without assisting at Prayers or the Sacrament, and for some years more in the state of those, for whom the Bishop implored the Divine Mercy; and after all, for some years more deprived of the Sacraments, tho admitted to Common Prayer; yea sometimes excluded for ever from the participation of the Eucharist, except at the hour of Death: as we find it set down in the Canons of the Councils of the 3^d, 4th, 5th, and 6th. Century, not to speak now of those additions that have been since made to the severity of those Ancient Canons. This Discipline as to the greatest part of these particulars, continued for above a thousand years in the *Western Church*. But what part of all these outward acts of Penance hath the Church of *Rome* retained?

I. She hath abolished all the rigor, and retains only an empty shadow thereof, in the Excommunications denounced at the

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beginning of *Lent*; and wherefrom they are again absolved on the *Thursday* called *In Cæna Domini*.

II. She hath so order'd the matter by means of Auricular Confession, that nothing now remains of publick Penance for publick sins; whereas the Church sometimes for private sins submitted the sinner to publick Penance, *Morin. de Pœnit. L. 5. C. 8.*

III. She has by the same means so wholly changed the notion of Penance, that even a person who has committed Murther, Adultery, or any other of those sins she terms Mortal, may soon after the fact be admitted to the Communion. We know how the *Jansenists* have been treated, upon suspicion that they intended to re-establish the rigor of the Ancient Canons, by debarring those from the Eucharist, that were guilty of such sins.

That she has abolished all the outward Rigor of Penance, is a matter that needs no proof, as being known to all the world. Where do we find in this Communion the least traces of those several Orders of Penitents that of old were so common in the Church? Has she retained any of those Penitential Canons which served for a rule to correct and chastise such great Sinners, tho we read them at this day at the end of the Decree of *Gratian*? We know that since the middle of the 13 Century *Alexander & Alex* hath expressly set down that almost all Confessors maintained, that all Penances were arbitrary, *i. e.* depended on the will of the Priest, who could impose more or less as he pleased, and that without sinning, as doing it in virtue of the keys. We know that Cardinal *Aureolus* hath observed about the year 1300. that in his time they were no more imposed; and that the custom of them was abrogated. And tho' we find some notable examples of Severity until the end of the 15 Century, for some very enormous crimes, yet we see that since that time, in imposing of Penance, they only made use of Rods, wherewith the Cardinals and Penitentiaries whipped their Penitents. Moreover *P. Thaumassin* tells us in his Preface to the Decree of *Gratian*, that in process of time they came to that degree of remissness, as only to take rods for a show, and out of Ceremony; so far were all acts of Penance difused since the year 1500.

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Sum de
Peccat.
Lib. 5. C. 1.

I know that in some parts of *Spain*, we find some obscure remains of this ancient Discipline. *Benedicti* speaks of some who whipt themselves in publick, in the Passion-week, carried Crosses on their shoulders, and performed other like acts of Penance; but for all that, the said Author acknowledges that the form of Penance practis'd in the Ancient Church, was no longer in being, and that the forementioned *Spanish* Penances, in which the faces of the Penitents were covered that they might not be known, were only arbitrary, depending on the will of those that underwent them.

If it be true then that the rigor of the Ancient Church was of great use for the humbling of sinners; if it be true that those severities performed in Publick were very efficacious to inspire Believers with a religious fear to avoid the like crimes; lastly, if it be true that the Ancient Church made use of this severity as a bank to stop the Corruption of the Age, and a Bulwark against the Calumnies of a *Celsus* or a *Julian*, who accused her of a soft indulgence for, and favouring of sin; the Church of *Rome* on the contrary has given the reins to sinners, and made way for all licentiousness, by abolishing the ancient severity, and hath opened the mouths of infidels to renew those accusations wherewith the Pagans of old charged the Church, *viz.* for admitting the most Criminal to her Communion.

I acknowledge that as the scandal that publick sins gave to those that knew of them, was repaired by Acts of publick Penance, so they could not be imposed on such whose sins were unknown, the Church of old wisely dispensing with this humiliation in those whose sins were not come to publick knowledg. But the Church of *Rome* hath so entirely taken away this distinction, that the most execrable sinner of her Communion, may after his being confest to a Priest, without giving the publick any tokens of his Repentance, pass for a true Penitent. Neither hath the opposition made against this Novelty, availed any thing, the Church of *Rome* having stopt the mouths of all opposers, by giving her Priests the character of Judges in the

Tribunal of Confession; and by maintaining, that provided a sinner submit himself to their Judgement, he is not obliged to undergo the Laws of Discipline, which the Primitive Church had prescribed to sinners, to be assur'd of the truth and sincerity of their Repentance.

T. 2. Con-
cil Spel-
man p.
337.

Not but that those who had any zeal for Religion, took notice that this change made an Inlet for all manner of vice. A Council held at *Lambeth* in 1281. *tit. de Pœnit.* declares as much expressly, attributing the abolition of Solemn and publick Penance to the negligence of spiritual Directors; it declares that this slackning of Penance did nothing else but greatly contribute to the excess and impunity of Crimes, and endeavours to re-establish the same; but the Power of Confessors being already too great, they could by no means reform these matters. The mischief increased daily, insomuch that if here and there any footsteps of severity were found in some Confessors, they only made use thereof to advance the interest of the Clergy.

Fascic. rer.
Expet.

The Princes of *Germany* presented in the year 1510. an hundred grievances against the Court of *Rome*, the 67th of which imported, That the Ecclesiastical Judges and Officers imposed such severe Penances upon Laicks, that they had rather buy them off with money, than perform them; by which means the Laicks were impoverished, and the Clergy enriched. But all this Remonstrance was vain. It was also in vain that Cardinal *Cajetan*, to restore Indulgences to their former credit, which Indulgences he look'd upon only as a remission of the Punishments imposed in Confession, advised Pope *Adrian* the 6th to reestablish the Penitential Canons; for Cardinal *Pucci* frustrated his design by remonstrating to the Pope that the execution of them was impossible. *Charles* the IX. King of *France*, demanded, in one of his Articles of Reformation presented to the Council of *Trent*, that Publick Penance for Publick sins might be re-established in the Church, *Art. 30.* But all the world knows what regard was had to that demand.

Fath. Paul
Lib. 1. Hist.
Conc.
Trid.

Mem. &
instruct.
pour le
Concil. de
Trent de
Mrs. du
Vai.

'Tis this overthrow of Discipline that has given rise to that scandal, wherewith the Church in former times reproached Hereticks : for at this day we find in that Communion a man guilty of Adultery at the Table of the Lord, as if he were pure and innocent. 'Tis at this day that we see a man that keeps his Concubines, and lives a debauch'd life, enjoy the same advantages with the chafteft and most virtuous persons of the world. *Nocte in Lupanari, mane in Altari, filiam Veneris nocte tangentes, filium Virginis mane contractantes*; as Cardinal Vitry expreffes himself in his History *Lib. 2. Cap. 5.* where he describes the state of the *Western Church*, giving the most horrid representation of it imaginable. A Priest cannot refuse Absolution to an Adulterers, or to a debauched person, as oft as they confess with regret, and a resolution to change their lives; this is the Doctrine of *Navarr. Cap. 3. Num. 20.* of his *Enchier*. A Priest may absolve a debauched person, saith *Cælestine de Sacer. Penit. Cap. 20.* when he doth not continually sin with her that is in the same house with him; as for instance, if he sins only twice a month, because he might do the same with a stranger. And this is the opinion also of *Grassius, Sancius, Vivaldus, Diana*, and other famous Casuists. And what is the consequence of this absolution, but a right to receive the Eucharist? All this is little; we see a Priest that keeps his Concubines, and a common Fornicator, have the priviledge of celebrating Mass, that is, to perform the greatest publick Religious function of the *Romish Church*; only because, forsooth, he hath confessed to one like himself, and recieved his absolution. For whereas the Canons of the Ancient Church would have subjected such an one to a Penance of many years, no sins at this day make a Priest irregular, but such as are very enormous and notorious. Now Fornication in the Church of *Rome* is not accounted an enormous vice, and such as merits deposition; and by notorious sins, they mean only those which the guilty person hath confessed before his Judge, or that are clearly prov'd against him, or for which he hath been publickly condemn'd, *Tolet. ibid.* That which I observe here is, that this custom is constant amongst

Tolet.
Sum. Confess. lib. 1. c. 68.
Ant. de Butrio & alii Diuc. ex tenore de remp. ordin. & in eodem at si Clerici depidui.

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them ; that all the Casuists of that Communion agree in this point, tho indeed nothing be more contrary to the Spirit of the Primitive Church, and of true Religion ; nothing wherein the corruption of that Church is more palpable, and nothing consequently whereof she ought to be more ashamed, in case she were in the least sensible of that respect and reverence that is due to the Mysteries of Religion.

But perhaps the Church of *Rome* in abolishing the External part of Penance, as it was practis'd in the Ancient Church, has at least retained the essential part of Penance, in prescribing to their Penitents what is necessary to true Conversion. This is that which is done by the Reformed Churches ; for tho they have not in all places established the same Rules which took place in the Primitive Church, as indeed it was no easy matter to reduce people to those first Rules, who had been accustomed to licentiousness under the conduct of the *Romish* Ministry ; yet they have omitted nothing that was necessary to give their Penitents a true aversion from vice. But alas ! the Church of *Rome* hath wholly overthrown the notion of Penance, when she teaches that the Sacrament of Penance, being joined with the simple attrition of the sinner, is sufficient to put him into a state of Grace and truly to reconcile him to God. We must a little explain this doctrine, that the horridness of it may appear, and to make it evident that nothing doth more palpably overthrow the Spirit of Religion.

Contrition, according to the Sentiment of the Church of *Rome*, imports a sorrow for our having offended God, not only because he can damn sinners, but also because he is infinitely worthy of our obedience and love. *Contrition* therefore supposeth not only the fear of Hell, but also the Love of God, which retakes its place in the sinners Soul, and which leads him again to the obedience of so good a God, whom he hath been so unhappy to offend. *Attrition* on the contrary, according to *their* opinion, doth not import any thing of the Love of God in the sinner, but only a fear of Hell, which makes him condemn his sin ; it is the fruit only of a slavish fear, arising from the prospect of the

Punishments designed for sinners. This being so, I desire the Reader to judge, whether the Church of *Rome* have not taken away the essential part of Repentance, in receiving for one of her maxims, That *Attrition* in conjunction with the Sacrament is sufficient to re-estate man in the grace and favour of God. And what tho she exhorts sinners to *Contrition*; is it not evident that the greatest part of sinners finding great trouble in doing that which they declare sufficient, will find much more difficulty to do what their Confessors judge not to be necessary, tho without doubt it be the better and surer way.

To set this dangerous overthrow of Repentance in a clear light, it will be sufficient to do two things; The first is to prove that *Attrition* imports no more, than what we have declared just now to be the opinion of the Church of *Rome*; the other is, That this *Attrition*, with the Sacrament of Penance, is sufficient to put a man in a state of Grace. If we prove both these points, it will be as clear as the day, that man may be restored to favour with God, without any act of the Love of God; which is a Doctrine as far estranged and remote from the nature of true Repentance, as any thing the spirit of man is capable to conceive.

Now we need not consult some singular Casuist, to prove that the definition of *Attrition*, such as we have set it down, is the common opinion of the *Romish* Church. Since first the distinguished between *Attrition* and *Contrition*, this has been the Common notion amongst her Divines; for they look upon infused Charity, as an effect of the Sacrament of Penance, whose essence they say consists in these words of the Priest, when he saith to the Penitent, *I absolve thee*; for so Fa. Amolet declares himself in his Abridgment of Divinity in *French*, Book 9. Ch. 3. p. 639; and the famous Mendicant *Peter St. Joseph* speaks to the same purpose in his Idea of Divinity concerning the Sacrament, lib. 3. c. 2. The Canonists themselves are of the same opinion. Abbot *Fagnani*, the greatest Canonist of his time, declares in his Work upon the Decretals, dedicated to Pope *Alexander* the VII. that the Priest of the *Greek* Church ought conditional-

In 2 p. 7
Decr. de
fac. Unq.
Cap. cum
venisset n.
97.

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ly to be re-ordained, for that the greatest part of them being ordained only with the imposition of hands, Charity persuades us to reordain them conditionally, because of the danger of souls, especially in the case of the Sacrament of Penance, which would be of no avail to those who are Attrite, should they be absolved by one that wants the Character of Priesthood; which he proves by the 4, and 7, Chap. of the 14. Session of the Council of *Trent*. The Casuists make no doubt of the point. This is the Doctrine of *Escobar* in his famous *Synopsis* of Moral Divinity, of the 37th. Edition, *Tract. 7. Cap. 4.* as also of the famous *Benedict Rhemy Noydens* in his *Practice of Curates*, the 14th. Edition, Printed at *Madrid* with all manner of Approbations in 1674. *Tract. 5. Cap. 5. N. 5.* The same Doctrine we find in the Catechisms for the Children of that Communion; the *Christian Instruction*, or Catechism printed in 1665. at *Paris*, and ordered to be alone taught throughout that Diocese, declares it self thus, p. 65. lesson the 6. concerning Contrition. *Quest. What is imperfect Contrition? Ans. It is a sorrow for having offended God, because of his Justice, which is not sufficient for the Pardon of our Sins, if it be not joined with Confession.* That which is considerable in this point is, that with one accord they give us a reason, which according to their Hypothesis is decisive in this matter, viz. If Charity were found in the sinner, he would already be in a state of Grace; but the sinner is not in a state of Grace before he has received the Sacrament, therefore *Attrition* is an imperfect state, which leaves something for the Sacrament to do; and on this account differs from *Contrition*, which re-estates a man in Grace, as being accompanied with Charity. And in case we should not be convinced with the force of this reason, they endeavour the same by two other much more irresistible Arguments; the first whereof is, because the point hath been thus determined by the Council of *Trent*, *Sess. 14. Cap. 4.* as may be seen in *Amelot* and a *St. Joseph*, at the places before cited. The 2d is, that they give to the words of the Priest, *I absolve thee*, a sense that necessarily imports this notion; *I absolve thee*, saith *Escobar*, that is to say, *I confer the Grace*

† which

Petrus a
St. Joseph
Idea
Theolog.
Sacram.
lib. 3. c. 2.

Theol.
Moral.
Tract. 7.
Ex. 4 c. 2.
n. 11.

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which is Expulsive of sin. See the sense of this form of words in *P. a St. Joseph in Thes. Univers. Theolog. de Pœnit. p. 110. I confer upon thee the Sanctifying Grace, which of it self forgives sins.*

The 2d Article which imports that *Attrition* is sufficient, being joined with the Sacrament of Penance, is altogether conformable to the Notions of the Council of *Trent*, from whence the *Roman* Divines draw their Definition. In effect, we are to observe three things here, which clearly decide the Point : The first is, That since the Council of *Trent*, we find few Divines that defend the Ancient Opinion of the necessity of *Contrition*, the contrary Opinion having gained so much ground as well Speculatively as Practically, that nothing is more generally believed and taught. *Benedicti* in his *Summa de Peccat. lib. 5. c. 1. p. 842.* makes the difference between Repentance considered as a Virtue, and as a Sacrament, *viz.* That all those of old that died before the Ascension of Christ, without perfect *Contrition*, are lost; the case not being so with us, who may be saved by *Attrition* alone, by means of the Sacrament of Penance, which confers Grace and Remission of Sins, *ex opere operato*, which the Virtue of Penance cannot do. The 2d is, That it is so certain a thing with them, that *Attrition* is sufficient, that the Directors are content and satisfied, in case their Penitents have but felt the motion of *Attrition* at the time when they made reflection on their sins in order to confess them, tho they feel no such motion whilst they are confessing. The 3d is, That a Father of the Oratory having declared in his remarks upon a Treatise of *St. Augustin*, that Repentance cannot be true, intire, nor assured, if it want the conditions of true *Contrition*, and that without it the Grace of the Sacrament of Penance cannot be obtained, the Divinity Faculty of *Paris* condemned the said Proposition as contrary to the Peace and Quiet of Souls, and to the confirmed Practice of the Church, capable to diminish the efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance, rash and erroneous. This Decree was made the 1st of July 1638. Whence it sufficiently appears, that

Sess. 14.
cap. 4.

Perr. a S.
Joseph I.
dea Theol.
de sacr.
13. c. 2. re.
fol. 5.

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that some Divines favouring the Doctrine of *St. Austin*, for endeavouring to oppose themselves to the Torrent that threatened to overthrow the Ancient Opinion, have been most solemnly condemned by that *Faculty*.

I acknowledg there have always been some Divines, who tho they teach that simple Attrition is sufficient with the Sacrament, yet endeavour to sweeten that Opinion, which in all appearance was not very pleasing to them; these by *Attrition* understand an imperfect Contrition, which supposeth some degree of the Love of God. But at the same time it is true,
 1. That these very Divines acknowledg Charity to be the fruit of Absolution, and believe that this imperfect Contrition would not be sufficient without the Sacrament, to restore a sinner to the state of Grace. This they express in conformity to the Council of *Trent*, which doth consider these motions only as dispositions to that Grace, which is conferred in the Sacrament; and Grace and Charity according to them differ only in Notion. 2. It is true that the opposite Opinion, which holds that *Attrition* imports nothing of the Love of God, but only a sorrow produced by the fear of Hell, doth generally obtain amongst those of the *Roman* Communion. It is hard to conceive how a belief so contrary to the Notion of Repentance could ever enter into the seat of Confession, and yet most sure it is, that it both is, and bears sway there.

Some Authors of the *Roman* Church ingenuously acknowledg, that the Opinion which supposeth that Contrition is not necessary to a Penitent, but that Attrition becomes Contrition by means of the Sacrament, is of no long standing, *Soto in 4. dist. 18. q. 3. Art. 2.* Yea it seems as if *Melchior Canus, Bishop of the Canaries*, who assisted at the Council of *Trent*, was the first that broached this Doctrine, That Attrition joined with the Sacrament of Penance sufficeth, *dist. 13. de Pœnit. Art. 7. N. 5, & 6.* But *Withal* says, that the surest way is to exert an act of Contrition, when danger of death obliges a sinner to confess. In the mean time let us consider how far this Doctrine pleased the Divines of *Rome*; many of the most famous of them

them have highly maintained this Opinion of *Melchior Canus*, and positively deny that a sinner is obliged to produce any Act of Contrition, or of the Love of God, in order to be reconciled with him, provided he makes use of Confession. These Doctors maintain, says the famous *P. Morinus*, that the Power only of loving God, produced by the Sacrament in the Souls of the ungodly, who are struck with the terror of Hell, doth justify them, and reconcile them to God; and furthermore, that it is not needful to love God sometimes, or so much as once during ones life, or to conceive the least Sorrow for having so grievously offended him; yea tho a sinner should have hated God to his last breath. Lastly, that the Faculty of loving God, produced by the Sacrament, is far more excellent than the very act of Love and Contrition it self.

De Pœnit.
lib. 8. c. 4.

It is hard to conceive there should be any Arguments to defend so prodigious an Opinion; but these Authors are not at all to seek for them, and those very solid too, if we will believe them: They maintain that the Excellence and Prerogative of the Sacraments of the Gospel, above those of the old Law, appears chiefly in this, that the Sacraments of the Gospel have delivered Christians from the heavy yoke of Contrition, and the Love of God. They pronounce with a Master-like Authority, That when Jesus Christ established the necessity of Confession, he took away the necessity of the Love of God, being appeased by the Habit of Loving God, for fear of over-charging the ungodly, and those that hate God, with too heavy a Burden. These are the Reasons alledged by *Henriquez lib. 4. Sum. c. 6. n. 5.* the same is also the Doctrine of *Vasquez in 4. part. q. 86. art. 2. dub. 6.* Of *Becanus cap. 25. de Pœnit. q. 7. n. 3.* Of *Laymannus* in his *Moral Divinity, lib. 5. tr. 6. c. 2.* Of *Lopez* in his *Instruct. Conscientiæ, cap. 12. q. 3.* Of *Pesantius* in his *Additions to St. Thomas, quest. 5. disp. 4.* Of *Puteanus* in 3. p. q. 90. 1 part. dub. ultim. Of the famous *Nicholas Isambert*, Professor of the Faculty of *Paris, disp. 14. de Pœnit. art. 11. n. 6. & disp. 13. art. 6, & 7.* and many others especially of the Modern Doctors.

I don't

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I don't think it needful to shew how opposite the Gospel is to this Opinion of the Modern Doctors, nor how contrary the same is to the Judgment of Antiquity. There are some Errors so absurd, that the serious refuting of them, gives them a kind of Authority. There is no Christian, whose Soul and Notions are not corrupted by the conduct of such Doctors, that can consider this Doctrine otherwise than ungodly, and the Society which defends or tolerates it, as a Society extremely corrupt. We shall necessarily pass this Judgment, if we consider the folly of that Principle on which they found this prodigious overthrow of Repentance. We may suppose them fallen into this horrible Opinion, by following the notions of the modern Schoolmen, and the Council of *Trent*, concerning the nature and form of Absolution. They set down two things which very naturally lead thereto; the one is, that Absolution which they take to be the Essentiality of the Sacrament of Penance, Confession and Satisfaction according to them being only the integral parts of it, is an act of a Judge who pronounceth and pardoneth the Penitent, which they gather from the form of words used in Confession, *Absolvo te*. The other is, That the Sacraments of the Gospel conferring Grace *ex opere operato*, the infusion of Grace is the infallible effect of Absolution; whence they very naturally conclude, That neither habitual, nor actual Charity is required before the Sacrament, which otherwise would be useless.

My intent is not to search to the bottom of these two absurd Propositions; it shall suffice me to evidence to the Reader how far the Church of *Rome*, who furnisheth her new Doctors with such Principles, the consequences of which make a Christians heart to tremble, is departed from that Doctrine of the Gospel, Primitive Antiquity, and even from the greatest part of her own Schoolmen. Notwithstanding, the Church of *Rome* at this day teaches, that by virtue of those words, *To whomsoever you forgive their sins, they shall be forgiven*; the Priests are established Judges in the Tribunal of Penance; yea such Judges by virtue of their Character, that without their Absolu-

Abolution *in re, aut in voto*, it is impossible to obtain remission of sin ; yet we maintain on the contrary, that the Primitive Church never drew any such inference from those words of our Saviour, no more than we draw that Authority from them for the Ministers of our Communion. I will not build any thing upon what *Scotus* acknowledges, who pretends that publick Penance, such as was used in the Primitive Church, was not the Sacramental Penance, wherein he is followed by *Angelus de Clavasio*, and *Gabriel Biel*. Nor do I take notice that the *Roman Penitential*, decreed by *Halicarius* in the 9th Century, and published by *P. Morinus*, declares in so many words, That in the absence of a Bishop or Priest, a Deacon may reconcile a Penitent ; which shews that the Abolution hath nothing common with that of the Church of *Rome* at this day, which cannot be given, but by him who hath the Character of a Priest or Bishop. However, it follows from hence, Either that this Authority of absolving Penitents, was not then own'd, because no other Penance was ever practised by the whole Church, besides the Publick Penance, as the most Learned of the *Roman* Communion do acknowledge ; or that this Authority of absolving sinners, was only considered as an act, whose only effect was to evidence, That the Penitent entred again into the Communion of the Church, whence he had been excluded.

But I will take notice of three or four Things, which evidence beyond exception, tho we should grant that the Publick Penance of the Ancients was a Sacramental Penance, That they had quite another notion of the Abolution given to Penitents, than the Church of *Rome* at present hath. The 1st Thing I observe is, That the Church for some time did exclude from the right of Publick Penance, those that were fallen into Idolatry, Murther or Adultery ; this is a truth taken notice of by *Sirmondus*, *Morinus*, and divers other Learned men of the *Roman* Communion. Whereupon 'tis very obvious to make these Two Reflections ; The first is, That the Church which was but newly come from under the Discipline of the Apo-

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files themselves, did not believe that the Absolution given to those that were admitted to Penance, was a Judicial Act, without which it was impossible that the Sinners Guilt should be pardoned; for had she been of the Opinion which the Church of *Rome* now maintains, no Cruelty could have been greater than to refuse Penance to a Penitent, because without it, it is impossible for him to obtain Absolution, which they suppose of absolute necessity to the Pardon of his sins. The 2^d Reflection we are to make on this rigor of the Ancients is, That their Church could never believe that this Absolution had the virtue of conferring Grace, *ex opere operato*, as the *Roman* School terms it, because it would be as great a Cruelty as the former, to deny a sinner that ardently desires it, the only means of obtaining Grace, which depends upon the use of the Sacrament.

The 2^d Thing I observe is no less decisive, if we compare the Practice of Antiquity for many Ages together, with the general Practice of the *Roman* Church, which is diametrically opposite to it. The Behaviour of the Primitive Church to sinners was this; she admitted them to Publick Penance for the first time; but if they chanced to relapse into the same or like Crimes, for which they had done Penance, she did not admit them again. Some Authors of the *Roman* Communion, have thought they could disentangle themselves from this Difficulty, by saying that the Church only admitted them to particular Penance; but Learned men of their Communion have so fully evidenced the falseness of this Pretension, that this subterfuge will scarce be made use of. On the contrary, let us take a view of the frequent repetition of Penances in the *Roman* Communion; of the reiterated Exhortations to have recourse continually to this Sacrament, where Remission of Sin and Grace is to be found; and we shall easily perceive that the Primitive Church, whose practice was so different from that of the Church of *Rome*, was as much estranged from her opinions on the two Points we have just now considered.

A 3^d Thing I observe, as very proper to make this matter appear

appear as clear as the day, is, That the whole Church during the 12 first Centuries, constantly believed these Two Things. 1. That Contrition and Charity were absolutely necessary in order to Reconciliation with God. 2. That the Absolution of the sinner was granted to him at the moment of his Contrition; the Absolution he received of the Priest, not effecting the pardon of sin, but only procuring an entrance into the Church, from whence he was banished for the offence he had given. It would be an easie matter for me to prove the first of these Truths, if Abbot *Doileau* in a Book of his, printed at *Louvain*, entituled, *Contrition necessary*, had not done it sufficiently to my hand; wherein he hath followed the opinion of many Ancient Divines, who do own, that Attrition was never acknowledged sufficient, joined with the Sacrament, till about the year 1220, about which time this Distinction began to be taught amongst the *Latins*. The 2d Proposition is no less certain, during the first 12 Centuries. To quit my self of the trouble of alledging a great crowd of Authors and Authorities, which would take me up too much time, I shall only take notice, that after the explication St. *Jerome* hath given of that famous Passage, *Et dabo tibi Claves Regni Cælorum*; where he sets down for a Maxim, That with God *non sententia Sacerdotum, sed reorum Vita quæritur*. And that the Priests under the New Testament have no further right than the Priests of old had who examined the Lepers; and there is scarce an Author amongst the Ancients that does not follow the same Notion; and they have done the same also about the Resurrection of *Lazarus*, whom Jesus Christ raised from the Dead, and afterwards ordered his Apostles to unbind him, which only imports the declaration of the Pardon of Sins, and attributes nothing to Absolution of what the Church of *Rome* ascribes to it. This is the Notion *Gregory 1st* gives us of it in his 26th Homily upon the Gospels. St. *Eloy* of *Noyon*. Hom. II. in *Evang.* *Paschasius Radbert*. l. 8. on the 16th of St. *Matthew*. *Haymo* Bishop of *Halberstat*, Homil. in *Fest. St. Petri & St. Pauli*. *Christianus Druthmarus* on the 16th of St. *Matth*. *Raoul* of *Flaix*

lib. 10. in Levit. Odo Abbas Clugniacensis in his Sermon upon Magdalen. Burchardus Bishop of Wormes, Decreti sui lib. 9. cap. 32. Yves of Chartres, Epist. 128. Rupertus Abbot of Thuits, lib. 10. in Matth. cap. 11. Pruno Bishop of Signe, in Joan. part 2. cap. 9. Hugo de St. Victore de Sacrament. cap. 23. Lombard lib. 4. cap. 17. Cardinal Pullus Sentent. part 6. cap. 1. Ricbardus de St. Victore de Potestate ligandi & solvendi, cap. 4. Petrus Blaesensis de Confess. Sacram. Radulphus Ardens. Serm. in 1. Dominic. post Pascha. I conclude with Pope Innocent III. who speaks thus on the 2d Penitential Psalm, Remissisti, ut patenter ostendat quod peccatum prius remittitur per compunctionem a Deo, quam pronuntietur per confessionem ab homine.

To the Three foregoing Remarks I will add this important Observation, *viz.* That so far was the Primitive Church from believing as the Church of Rome doth at present, that the form of Absolution, *Ego absolvo te*, did constitute the essential part of Penance, and was the foundation of a Tribunal properly so called; I say, so far were the Ancient Church from conceiving any such thing, that we may boldly assert, that the said Form was not so much as known amongst them; nor does the Church of *England* use it in the sense the *Romans* do. There be two things that are incontestable as to this matter, and acknowledged by the most famous Doctors of the *Roman* Communion: The one is, That the Primitive Church never attributed the Reconciliation of Penitent sinners to any thing but the Prayers that were made for them, when by the Imposition of hands they were admitted to the Sacraments. This is that which *Morinus* proves at large *de Pœnit. lib. 6. cap. 21. & Lib. 8. cap. 8.* The same Author proves, according to the sense of many of the Fathers, That after Confession of sins, Absolution was given by the Prayers of the Priests, *lib. 8. c. 9.* He proves that all the Ancient Rituals have nothing but Prayers instead of the form of Absolution, *ibid. cap. 10.* And lastly, hereupon he establisheth this considerable Truth, That in the Primitive Church they sometimes made use of the same Prayers, as well in regard of the subject, as words, to impose Penance,

Penance, as to confer Absolution, *lib. 9. cap. 32.* so far were they from believing, that it was necessary to absolve the Penitent, with some other form than that of Prayers, after which the Penitents were admitted to the Enjoyment of all the Rights of which Believers were possessed.

The other thing I set down is, That it is absolutely false that ever any Christian Church made use of these words, *I absolve thee*, in the act of Absolution, save only the Latin Church, and she never did it neither, till about the midst of the 13th Century; which change afterwards occasion'd a thousand questions and difficulties. We find the History of this change in one of the works of *Thomas Aquinas*, who undertook the defence of this form of Absolution then newly introduced. 'Tis strange to see the course he takes to establish this Novelty; and we may boldly affirm, that he overthrows almost all arguments taken from the Antiquity of the Church, that might be objected to him, as well as the grand Argument of Tradition. That this was so as I have here represented it, two of the most famous men of that Communion have not dar'd to deny, the one is *Morinus*, who relates the history thereof, *de Pœnit. l. 8. c. 20, &c.* The other is the late *M. de Launoy* in one of his Epistles to *Fa. Baron* a Dominican.

I suppose these four reflections sufficient to evidence to any Judicious Reader, how much the Church of *Rome* hath innovated about the nature of Absolution, and with what rashness they have erected a Tribunal for their Priests, whence they pronounce with the Authority of Judges, grounding their proceedings on the words of our Saviour; but if we should grant them, that the words of our Saviour give the Ministers a Right to pronounce these words, and make use of that form, which after all ought only to be taken in a sense of declaration to the Penitent, after one is assured of the truth of his Contrition and Repentance; how can the Church of *Rome* defend the sense they have affixed to these words, *I absolve thee*, that is, I confer upon thee Sanctifying Grace? Surely error was fain to take a long stretch, to advance so far. *Melchior Canus p. 4. Relect. de Sacramentis*

sacramentis in Genere, declares that the Schoolmen were much at variance about the manner how Sacraments are the cause of Grace, being so far from explaining the matter, that they only confound the Readers with the diversity of their opinions; and that there was no one point about which there was greater dissention, not only amongst the ignorant, but also amongst learned men. Some conceive them to be Physical Causes, as the Fire is the cause of Burning; others consider them as conditions without which Grace cannot be produced. So that a *Chaos* of obscurities ariseth from the different manner of explaining those various kinds of Causality maintained by the Schoolmen. But what matters if the light be clouded by these mists, as long as a Divine Ray darted from the midst of these obscurities, reveals to the Doctors of the *Romish* Church, that Grace is conferred by these words, *Absolvo te, i. e.* I confer Sanctifying Grace? We never heard any thing of infus'd habits before the 12th Century, the Schoolmen having hammer'd that notion on the Anvil of *Aristotles* writings, as Dr. *Boisseau* acknowledges in his Treatise of necessary Contrition, chap 3. In the mean time this Doctrine at last hath carried it, and this belief being once formed, that Grace is confer'd in the Sacraments, and that the Essentiality of the Sacrament consists in these words, *Ego Absolvo te*, they have built thereupon, as a point altogether incontestable, that the conferring of Grace absolutely depends on those words pronounc'd by the Priest. The Church for many Ages had simply believed that the prayers pronounc'd in the name of the Church in behalf of the Penitents, obtain'd from God the Grace of the remission of their sins, which they had publicly confessed with great Humility. Now the intention of the *Romish* Church being changed, she hath also altered the sense and meaning of those Prayers, which were no longer of any use, since the Priests were established Judges, and God had invested them with the Power of conferring that Grace, which restores the sinner to that state from whence he was fallen by his sin.

I scarce know whether it be possible to conceive a more terrible

rible overturning than that I have now represented. If the matter were less important, the danger would not be so great; but the Salvation of Souls being concern'd therein, it is apparent that this overturning can never be sufficiently exaggerated. Let us now after all take a view of those works which the Church of *Rome* imposes upon Penitents, under the notion of Satisfaction, to appease the Justice of God. My intent is not now to examine whether the *Romish* Church have not in this regard also, overthrown the notion of the Primitive Church; neither will I insist on the Custom of that Church, to give the Absolution before any satisfaction was made; the first of these particulars would cast me upon a Controversy too Speculative for the discourse I intend; and for the 2^d, viz. the overturning of the Primitive Order, that is but too palpable and too notorious to be excused or defended, notwithstanding all the artifices, that have been made use of for that purpose. The *Jansenists*, after Monsieur *Arnaud*, have opened the eyes of all the world as to this point; and tho they have not been able to reclaim the Judgments of the Doctors of their Communion, at least they have made it evident that all those who make any reflection on things, cannot dissemble their dislike of such a strange overturning, caused by men who boast of nothing more than their adhering to the Maxims of Antiquity.

Some it may be will imagin, that because the Church of *Rome* considers *Satisfaction* as a part of Penance, she does not exclude the Love of God from the number of those acts that are necessary to restore a man to the state of Grace, seeing she imposeth for satisfaction, Fasting, Prayers, and Alms, which she calls satisfactory works. But those that think so, meerly delude themselves, and overthrow the Tribunal of Penance according to the Judgment of the *Romish* Divines. The reason is evident; for if the *Romish* Church did not believe that the Absolution of the Priest was a Judicial act properly so called; if she were content to teach as the Protestants do, that it is only a declaration made to the sinner, that God pardons him, if his Repentance be sincere; it might easily be maintained, that the sinner is not re-
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restor'd to a state of Grace, till he be restor'd to that of Charity. But it is too much the interest of *Rome* to maintain that the Priest is a Judge in the Tribunal of Confession, ever to make use of such an Answer. See here another inconvenience she ought to take, all the care imaginable to avoid; for were people once persuaded, that Absolution is not efficacious, as soon as pronounced, it would give a great advantage to those who have endeavour'd to renew the Custom of deferring Absolution till after the sinner has performed the Penance impos'd on him; which would soon overthrow all the great advantages which are reaped from the tribunal of Confession.

Thus it appears clearly, that the Church of *Rome* hath not only abolish'd the external troublesome part of ancient Penance, but hath also abrogated that which is the most essential inward part thereof, *i. e.* the necessity of Contrition, and the Love of God, without which it is evident that Absolution, which is the sole act of the Priest, is of none effect.

I am not ignorant that it may seem to some as if I dealt too hardly with the Church of *Rome*, in maintaining that she hath overthrow'n all the Rights of Penance; for she seems to aim at nothing less, than to let sinners go unpunish'd; her Pastors that pardon like Judges, do also impose Penalties as Judges, proportionable to the offence against God, and put the sinner upon Penitential acts, according as they think just for to appease the Divinity. To make out the vanity of this objection, I need only in few words to set down the opinions of the Church of *Rome* about the matter of Indulgences: for we cannot know this affair, without comprehending that the Popes who are the Authors of Indulgences, and who have infinitely multiplied their concessions of that nature, have totally abolish'd all necessity of discharging the acts of Penance.

The first Indulgences that ever were heard of, were granted by *Gregory* the 7th, whom the Church of *Rome* hath rank'd among her Martyrs; he granted Pardon of sins to all those who would take up arms against his Enemies; as appears from a Letter he wrote on this matter to *Anselm* of *Luca*, his Legate.

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This Example of his was soon imitated by Pope *Urban* the II. at the Council of *Cleremont* in *Auvergne*, where he made use of this expedient to incline the Christians of the *West*, to undertake the Holy War. This Pope was induced hereunto by the suggestion of one *Peter* the Hermit of the Diocese of *Amiens*, upon account of a Vision he had seen in the Temple of *Jerusalem*. At that time there remained yet some shadow of the ancient severity accommodate to the Barbarous Genius of those times; but this Indulgence of the Pope, did in a manner wholly abolish all those remains in the *West*: for those who were willing to undertake this voyage, were not only acquitted from performing their imposed Penance, but they also who gave any assistance to these Pilgrims, enjoyed the same dispensation. Fa. *Maimbourg* hath sufficiently declared the goodly success of these excellent Enterprises, which continued till after the middle of the 13. Century, in overthrowing the discipline of Penance. Fa. *Morinus* hath done the same in Latin, by recounting the Authors that set themselves against these dispensations, of which the Popes were the Authors.

The Bishops also taking Example by the Pope, increased the said Corruption, by granting Indulgences for the repairing of Bridges, and Highways, and for the building of Churches: but they not having so unlimited a power as the Popes whose Example they followed, the Church of *Rome* is particularly obliged to Pope *Boniface VIII.* for the total ruine of Discipline; the happy invention of the *Jubilee* being due to him; a Cardinal of his House hath set down the History of the invention, and 'tis hard to determine whether we ought more to be astonished at the impudence of a cheat they produc'd, who pretended to have assisted at a *Jubilee* 100 years before, at the boldness of those that countenanc'd this cheat, or the sottishness of all *Europe* whom the Pope caught in a net so ill spread, every one carrying to *Rome* immense sums of money to buy the Pardon of their sins, and Indulgences, which the Pope at that time dispensed very freely to all sorts of sinners, *etiam non contritis nec confessis*, they are the words of *Corio* of *Milan*, who gives us

the History thereof. But since that time the Popes have shortened the time of those *Jubilees*, have granted Indulgences upon all accounts whatsoever, and for money have given them in all places, to all Orders, almost to all Churches, to certain Altars, to release souls out of Purgatory, by getting a Mass said for them there; by which means the fear of Censures hath been in a manner wholly abolished; and that of Purgatory much diminished by this easy way of getting rid from thence, only by procuring a Mass to be said at one of these privileged Altars.

But yet some will say, that the Priests impose very severe Penances in the tribunal of Confession. This is not a thing absolutely true, if we consider the carriage of Confessors, and the Character of some sinners. We know that in many Cases the Priest cannot impose any Penance at all; and that in many other, sinners may be dispensed with from undergoing them. *Petrus de St. Josepho* treats at large of these Cases, in his Idea of Theology upon the Sacraments, *lib. 3. cap. 4.* We know also the opinion and practice of a great number of Divines and Directors, who maintain that a sinner satisfies not only by works of Supererogation, but also by those he is obliged to do; so that in keeping the Commands of God, he satisfies for the Punishment of his sins. This is the Doctrine of *St. Thomas, Richard, Giles of Rome, Gabriel, St. Anthony and Cajetan*; which makes *Benedicti* observe, that when a Confessor doth not impose any other satisfaction, he must at least hint thus much to them, to the end that these good works may serve instead of satisfaction. But supposing that the cases wherein the Confessors impose no Penance at all, were very rare, yet we must own these three considerable points as to this matter; one is, that sinners may lawfully refuse the Penances imposed on them, in case they be willing to satisfy for the said default in Purgatory; Another is, that the Church of *Rome* hath reduced the greatest part of her Satisfactory works to a certain number of things which may easily be performed by a *third* person, by which means he who hath committed the sin, is wholly discharged of that trouble, and is

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of special use to keep up the credit of Monks, who take upon them these Penances to the great ease of sinners. The 3^d is, that by her Indulgences she has made the terrors of Purgatory of no use, nothing being more easy than to get out from thence.

First then I say, that it is the Current Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, that a sinner may refuse the Penance imposed on him, if at the same time he submit himself to undergo them in Purgatory. But forasmuch as this Doctrine may be unknown to those who are not acquainted with the secrets of the Seat of Confession, I think my self obliged solidly to evince the same; which I can no way better perform, than by shewing that this is the opinion of the most famous Canonists, of most Divines, and practic'd at *Rome*, and in all the Churches of its Communion. 1. The Cardinal *de Hostia in cap. significavit. de Pœnitent. & Remissione*, maintains exprelly, that if a Penitent cannot perform the Penance imposed on him, if he be contrite, the Priest ought to absolve him with some slight Penance, or without any at all, if he says he cannot perform the same; the reason is, because if he do not perform his Penance here, he shall satisfy for it in Purgatory. *Panormitanus* teaches the same thing on the same Chapter; as also the Author of the Book *Rosella 5. Confessio. l. n. 10.*

In cap.
significa-
vit. de
pœnit. &
remis.

Their Divines are of the same opinion; as we may see in *Scotus in 4. dist. 18. Quæst. unica in Gabriel in 4. dist. 10. q. 1. dub. 1. in Cajetan. in Summa. 5. Satisfactio; in Medina Codex de Confess. q. 4. and in Beia p. 3. in respons. cas. 3.* See how an Author that passeth under the name of the famous *Gerson*, expresses himself on this point: "It is the surer way, says he, to send sinners to Purgatory with a slight Penance, to which they are willing to submit, and which probably they will perform, than to cast them into Hell by imposing on them a great Penance they will never perform. He that puts off his Penance to the other world, doth foolishly indeed; yet ought to be absolved, if he does not do it, because he believes there is no Purgatory, but because of tenderness, weakness, or Poverty. The same opini-

Tom. 2.
p. 35.

Bochet.
Decret.
Eccles.
Gallic.

on we find in *Scotus, Gabriel, Cajetan, Sylvester, Medina, Tannerus* T. 4. D. 6. q. 3. *dub. 2.* And that it may appear that this is not only some private opinion, we must observe that this is a definition of the Council of *Langres* held in the year 1507. For speaking of Penitents, it charges the Priests to have a care not to lay difficult and burdensome Penances upon them, but such only as they believe the Penitent can and will do, lest he should encrease his sin, in not performing his Penance, tho they should enjoy nothing but an *Ave Maria*: for it is sufficient for the Priest, adds the Council, that his Penitent is absolved, and to put off his Penance to Purgatory, since he cannot send him to Paradise. In a word, this is the constant and Authoriz'd practice of the *Roman Church*. *Navarrus* maintains this opinion, because he finds it received at *Rome*, and over all the world, that Absolution is not refused to any for that reason alone, because he will not accept of the Penance imposed on him; and *Fa. Vagnarek* a Jesuit, famous by his Writings on the Decretals, calls him an ignorant and rash fellow, who had accused the opinion of *Cardinal de Hostia*, of Singularity.

Alex. Alen.
q. 83, 85.
Thom. in
4. dist. 20.
q. 13. Be-
nedict.
Summa de
Peccat. 1.
3. c. 5.

I say in the 2^d place, that it is a constant Belief and Practice, that Penance may be performed by means of a third Person. It is a thing well known, that the Religious in *Spain* play for their Penances imposed on them by their Confessors, at *Tick-tack*; they that have the bad luck to lose, charging themselves with the burden of them. *Thomas Gage* relates the same of his own observation, as practis'd in the *West-Indies*: But because this may be lookt upon as a thing irregular, and not authorized, I shall not insist on it, but will tie my self to publick Custom. 1. The *Roman School* teaches, that the Satisfaction performed by a third Person, may be imputed to another, and it is the very foundation of Indulgences, whose Treasury contains all the superfluous satisfactions of the Saints, who suffer'd more than they were obliged to do. This cannot be denied, if we consider what *Bellarmin* hath writ on this Point, *de Indul. l. 1. c. 2. § 1. 2. c. 4.* and what other Divines of the same School do maintain with one accord, since the time of *Luther*, in defence of Indulgen-

ces. 2. We are to observe, that the Pope not only lays up in this Treasury the Satisfactions of those who are Dead, but also of the Living, who perform more Penitential works than they are obliged to do. 3. There is nothing more common than to undergo Penances, for relieving of Souls in Purgatory. 4. It is also very common in that Communion to charge a Friend Male or Female, with the Penance one hath accepted of. *Thomas Aquinas* maintains on this Principle, That they did not publish the sins of Persons submitted to Publick Penance; and the reason he alledgeth is, because a Person may submit himself thereto for another; which makes that the Penance any one undergoes, cannot serve to make his sin publick, forasmuch as it may not be undertaken for his own sin. The Gloss of the Canon Law pretends, that a Son may fast instead of his Father, a Brother for his Sister, and so of the rest.

In effect, it is but too well known, that according to this commodious Maxim, persons of Quality, and such as are nice and delicate, being willing to be quit of the trouble of Fasting, send a Daughter of their Family to a Convent, who is charged with a Commission of Fasting and Praying for them, and undergoing the Penances imposed on them. Famous Universities have Authorized the like Substitutions, *servatis conditionibus*, being consulted in such cases. So that we see they have found a mean to make the Yoke of Penance the most light and easie Yoke imaginable.

Last of all, I say, That the Pope hath made a meer *Goblin* of Purgatory, which can no longer fright any but children; and from henceforth he that lights in there, or continues there, may thank himself. For who knows not how many ways there be to avoid ever coming there, or to get out presently in case a sinner have been negligent of making use of those in his lifetime? One only Mass said at a Priviledged Altar, does the business, and the charge is very moderate. They broke their heads formerly in procuring a great number of Masses to be said, every one paying for a great many in one Monastery. These foundations and obligations of saying Masses being so far multiplied,

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plied, that there were neither Priests nor Days enough for to answer them all ; but a good remedy has been found out, for one Conventual Mass answers all, and equally satisfies for all ; things being in these terms, a sinner must be very timid to apprehend the Flames of Purgatory ; when the Flames of Hell be not capable to stop his Passions, I say the Flames of Hell, against which there is no Remedy. We may easily imagine what impression the Flames of Purgatory can have upon their Spirits, which may be so easily, so surely, and so cheaply remedied or avoided.

There remains only one thing to be considered, which seems to form an objection against what is here set down ; and that is, the nature of the Penances that are imposed in the Tribunal of Confession ; the Penitents are there submitted to Fasting, Prayers and Alms ; these are the very Essentials and distinguishing Characters of Penance established in the Church of *Rome*, whatever alteration there may have been made in the acts of Penance, and tho the nature of it has been much enervated to authorize this Tribunal, which sets sin at so cheap a rate : But this very thing makes it evident, that there cannot be a greater or more deplorable overturning of Repentance, than that which we object to the Church of *Rome* ; as may with ease be made out.

What properly is the Prayer of a Penitent, if we will judge of it with the least Attention ? Without doubt his Prayer must suppose a Confession of his Sin, and an intreating of forgiveness ; to be convinced of this, we need only to read the 51st Psalm ; but what is the Prayer of a Penitent according to the Sense of the Church of *Rome* ? It is chiefly the requesting of the Pardon of Venial Sins, which are not any matter of Confession, God pardoning them without any Prayer or Request on the sinners side ; and not the asking of Pardon for mortal sins, which indeed is almost wholly useless, because God doth not grant the Pardon of mortal sins, but by the mouth of Priests, who are Judges in the Tribunal of Confession. So that the Satisfaction, of which Prayers are a part, not being imposed,

Bellarmin.
l. 1. de Bonis operibus c. 6.

fed, but at the time when the sinner is reconciled by Absolution from the Priest, it follows that those Prayers are not for to obtain the Absolution already received in the Sacrament, so as nothing is left to be prayed for, but only the remission of Venial Sins. To make us the more sensible of this Mystery, we are to know that the Divines of the Church of *Rome* maintain, That when in the Lords Prayer we beg the Pardon of our sins, we do not ordinarily beg the Pardon of our Mortal sins, but more commonly that of our Venial Sins only. The *Jansenists* have in this Point followed the stream of their School, in their Explication of the Lords Prayer. The Consequence of this Doctrine is terrible ; for if it be true that in that Prayer we ask chiefly of God the remission of slight sins, then we are not obliged but only to the forgiving of the lesser Offences of those that offend us ; which Maxim would suit very well with the Revengeful, to whom otherwise this Prayer must needs be very uneasie.

If the Church of *Rome* had not defined, that these words of the Priest spoken to the Penitent, *I absolve thee*, are the form of the Sacrament of Penance, one might imagine that the Prayers which the Priest presents to God for the Sinner, whether before or after his Absolution, must have some effect towards the obtaining the Pardon of sins, if those which the Priest imposes should not be successful enough to concur to the said Remission ; but the Divines of the *Roman* Church are so afraid to cast the least blemish upon the Jurisdiction of the Priests, that they expressly declare, That the Prayers which the Priest pronounceth on this occasion, tho he seem instantly to demand forgiveness of the sin or sins of his Penitent, do not in the least contribute to the said Remission. See what *Benedicti* tells us as to this point in his *Summa*, lib. 5. cap. 1. *The Form of this Sacrament*, saith he, *are the Sacramental Words which the Priest pronounceth over the Penitent, saying, I absolve thee from thy sins in the name of the Father, &c. all the other Words and Prayers uttered before and after Absolution, are not essential to the Sacrament.* He proves this by the Authority of
Scotus

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Scotus in 4. Dist. 14. q. 4. as also by that of the Council of Trent, *Sess. 14. cap. 3.*

Bellar. ubi
supra.

However it be, the *Roman* Church believes she has a solid ground for giving this sense to that Article of the Lords prayer we before mentioned; her reason is, because the Lords prayer is the prayer of Children; that is, of those who are in the state of Grace; now because there is no re-entring into that state, when one is gone out from it, but by the Absolution of the Priest, it seems ridiculous to believe, either that in this Article we ask a Grace of God, which he is resolved not to grant to any ones prayer; or that we only ask the forgiveness of Venial sins; now this being granted, is it not a fine trick to impose upon a Penitent the saying of the Lords prayer 2 or 300 times over, as the practice commonly is, and to believe at the same time that he scarcely all this while asks pardon of God for the sin of which he is guilty, and for which he is put upon praying. In truth, 'tis almost impossible to conceive how far this error extends it self. I take it for an incontestable Truth, that the Lords prayer is a Model or Form of the Prayers we are to present to God; and therefore, I think, we ought not to suppose that the Church of *Rome* prescribes other prayers, without reducing them to the same sense, as to the matter of Remission of sins, which she has put upon the Lords Prayer. Now whether Prayers with that Limitation are to be accounted truly Christian Prayers, I leave to all those to examine, who have not stifled all the Dictates of Conscience.

As for the Fasting that is imposed on Penitents, the illusion therein is as palpable, as in the foregoing Article: Here it is that the Maxim of *M. de Laubespine*, Bishop of *Orleans*, takes place, that the names of Antiquity continue after that the things themselves are greatly changed from what they were then. Amongst all People that ever have been, or yet are in the world (except the *Latins* for some late ages), to fast, hath and doth still signifie an Abstinence from all sort of Meat, during the time of the Fast; God explains it so in his Law; the former Practice of the *Latin* Church was so, and the thing

thing is acknowledged by Authors of the *Roman* Communion. But it is no more so now in the *Roman* Church, but only distinction of meats; 'tis no more a total abstinence, for they have leave to eat and drink before Supper on those days of Mourning. If you ask them who hath thus changed the nature of things? They answer, that it is the effect of Custom, and they establish it for a Maxim, That Custom has power to derogate from the Law. *Avendan Thesauri Indici*, p. 216. n. 272. *Diana* p. 1. Tr. 9. *Resol.* 21. They tell us very sincerely, that notwithstanding the opposition of the Ancient Law, they have reduced Fasting to eating once at noon, and a Collation in the Afternoon; and that for the rest, their Church doth not simply prohibit those things which are not taken chiefly for Nourishment, as Electuaries and Aromatical Confections; for that tho they nourish a little, yet are chiefly made use of to help digestion, *St. Thomas Aquin.* 2. 2. q. 147. a. 6. After all this, it is not needful to set down the mitigations the Casuists afford their Penitents on this point, nor to reckon up the several sorts of people that are dispensed from it; it being very evident, that *Fasting* is a word that signifies nothing in that Communion, and is of no use in Penance properly so called.

Casal. de
ritib. c. 62.
p. 147.

Casal. ubi
supra.

It is also as clear, that the Alms wherewith the Penitents can be charged, are so inconsiderable, that they are not worth speaking of. 1. It is apparent that a Confessor cannot impose this kind of Penance upon those who by their state and condition have no right to give Alms; for all the Casuists agree, That Alms suppose a Right over the thing that is given, therefore all those who are under the power of another, cannot be obliged to give Alms; whence it follows, that Children, Servants, Wives, and other like Persons, can give but little or nothing; and what they do give, must be presumed to be done with the knowledg and permission of the party under whose power they stand. Thus *Binsfield* adviseth in his *Moral Theology*; so that here we see very happily a great part of Mankind excepted from this kind of Penance. 2. It is certain that if some of the *Roman* Divines maintain, that a man

Pag. 392.
de Ele-
mosyn.
Edit. Pa-
ris.

(a) In c.
 si vero de
 Jure jur.
 (b) 2. p.
 tit. 1. cap.
 14. v. Ele-
 emos.
 (c) In Reg.
 mor. in 4.

who enjoys over above what the necessities of Nature and his condition require, is obliged to give Alms to the Poor, tho they be not in extreme necessity, but only in considerable want; there is on the other hand a great number, such as *Pa-normitan* (a), *St. Antonin* (b), *Rosella* (c), *Durand*, and others, who defend the contrary Opinion. Which gives us occasion to make these two Reflections; the first is, that the Confessor can only enjoyn Alms as a good work; so that if he believes that the obligation to Alms-giving doth not take place according to the 2^d opinion, he must not prescribe it. The 2^d, that if the Confessor be of the 1st opinion, and the Penitent of the 2^d, he may very well refuse the Penance imposed on him, because he is of a contrary Opinion to his Confessor about the obligation to give Alms.

The last Casuists having taken a great deal of pains to clear the Rights of Confessors, and also to make the Penitents sensible what their Rights are, to refuse Penances or accept of them, I think my self obliged to terminate this matter, by making some Reflections upon the great and happy effects their study hath produc'd for to ease Sinners of the severity of Penance. The *Roman* Divines and Canonists have much barr'd the question of *Probability*; and tho at first they were much divided upon the point, yet the strongest and greater party, have so vigorously maintain'd their Maxims and practice, that nothing is wanting to the glory of their Triumph. Behold here their grand Doctrine, which imports, that as soon as any grave Author or Confessor maintains any opinion, the same may be followed safely. From which happy discovery it follows, that a Confessor may absolve his Penitent, yea, may be forc'd by his Penitent to absolve him, tho the Confessor may be of an opinion opposite to that of the Grave Author. 'Tis worth our pains to take a view of all the comforts and mitigations which this happy discovery affords to the Tribunal of Confession; but this is a Subject deserves a particular consideration; what is already said, is sufficient without that, to evidence that the *Roman* Church hath caused a great overturning in the matter

ter of Penance; that all the stories she tells us, to set forth her Severity, is a meer illusion, and that her insulting over the Protestants in this matter, when carefully examined, produceth as just an aversion against her Morals and Discipline, as against her opinions. I conclude this Discourse with some Reflections upon the things therein set down, and I suppose the Reader will not find them extravagant from the Subject I have undertaken to handle.

The First Reflection.

The First Reflection we may make upon my objecting to the *Roman Church* the overthrow of Penance, is, That there be several matters of Fact that are incontestable, *viz.* The abolition of the External part of Penance; the Change of the form of Absolution; the Practise of Indulgences, and other things believed and practised by virtue of the Definition of her Councils and Popes, which by a great part of that Communion are lookt upon as infallible. So that their overthrowing of Penance is a matter of fact that is Authentick, and against which nothing can be excepted. As for those things which are not yet defined by any Councils or Popes, some may think that I impute them unjustly to the *Roman Church*: To which I have this to answer, That if I ascribe them to the Church of *Rome*, I have a very good ground for it, and to which nothing that is rational can be opposed; which is, That in matters in which the Conduct and Salvation of Souls is concern'd, we have reason to impute to a Society, as the Church of *Rome* is, what is authorized by Publick Authority, by Example, by Bishops, by Inquisitors, by Universities, and in a word, what is publickly permitted by the Pope who is Head of that Society. If the Divines, whose Errors we have represented upon the matter of Penance, did write without any approbation; if they were expos'd as a Prey to the Inquisitors; if they were degraded and banished from their Universities; if the Bishops entred the Lists with them, as they do against the *Jansenists*; if they were

censured by the Popes, we should be very unjust in saying that the *Roman Church* approves their opinions. But there is nothing of all this; they write with Approbation, they are scattered through all the Religious Orders; they have a share in the Tribunal of the Inquisition, and are the Ministers of it; they have the priviledg to teach publicly at *Rome*, as well as in all other places of that Communion; they publicly refute the Books of those who desire to retain the Ancient Opinions of the Church; the Pope, who hath his Nuncio's and Inquisitors every where, lets them alone without molesting or condemning them; the Congregation of the *Expurgatory Index* doth not meddle with them; they are the Directors of the Princes of that Communion; in a word, they are the men that rule all, and govern all; and how can we then do less than charge the *Roman Church* with the overthrow of Penance, which they are the cause of by their opinions and practice? 'Tis well known that the Pope sometimes makes use of his prudence to avoid bringing himself into trouble; thus we have seen him dissemble, and not take notice of the Definitions of the Clergy of *France*, about the point of his pretended Infallibility, and Right to Depose Kings. But yet we see withal, that he hath made the Clergy of *Hungary* act contrary to these Definitions; he hath employed the Zeal of the Religious of *Genoa* against the same points; he hath refused, for the same reasons, to receive the nomination which the King had made of those who assisted at the Assembly of the Clergy in 1682; he hath prohibited the Books of *Fa. Alexander*, which maintain those Definitions. So that whatsoever care he takes to dissemble his Resentments, all the world knows he is not well pleased with the definitions of the Clergy of *France*; and all zealous Papists look upon them as Rebels, that revolt against the Authority of the Holy See. But he hath no reason to fear any such thing from the censuring of those Propositions we have mention'd; because all these, or their Books, are subject to his Authority, and in the mean time we don't see that he gives the least mark of his indignation, or inflicts the least

Censure either on the Books or the Authors. Wherefore it will not seem strange, if we apply here the maxim of an Ancient Pope, which saith, *that we approve the error we do not correct, when we have right and power so to do.*

The Second Reflection.

It will probably appear strange to the Reader, that we reproach the Church of *Rome* for Abolishing the external severity of Penance, as the same was in use in the first Ages of the Church: the reason is, because it is unseemly to reproach a disorder we are guilty of our selves: But I have some very considerable things to return in answer to this also; the first is, That we have great reason to humble the *Roman* Church, who prides her self so much in her conformity with the Ancient Church, by representing to her, how far she is estranged from the Maxims of Antiquity concerning this point of Penance. Nothing is more uncouth than the manner wherewith they object to us the contempt of some Canons of Ancient Councils; we hear them amplifying the illustrious titles they give to the Ancient Canons, as if they had been dictated by the Holy Ghost; and after all, we find nothing more neglected than they are in the *Roman* Communion. We may therefore with Justice object to the Church of *Rome*, what was said to *Rome* of old, who objected to Christians the Antiquity of her Religion; You talk of your Antiquity, and yet you change every day. The 2^d is, that we have reason to consider the Monastick Orders, especially since the 13th Century, as the corrupters of the severity of Religion; 'tis to them we are beholden for the abolishing of the External part of Penance: for as they in the 13th Century put themselves in possession of the conduct of souls in the seat of Confession, so we find that their interest soon made them make use of this way to introduce the foresaid slackness of Penance, by means whereof they snatched the People from the conduct of their ordinary Pastors. *Matthew of Paris* takes notice of the maxims of English-men, after that *Gregory ix.* had granted to
the

Ad An.
1246. p.
466. &c
467.

the *Jacobites* and *Franciscans* the power of hearing Confessions. They lost all manner of Respect for their Pastors, in whose presence thenceforward they had no occasion to blush; they whispered to one another, Let's do whatever we list, and then confess our selves to some wandering *Jacobite* or *Franciscan*, whom we never saw before, nor shall ever see again. Et sic, saith he, contemptis Ordinariis & eorum Disciplinis Peccatum copiosius, exuberavit. I say in the 3^d. place, That seeing it is certain among the Protestants, that the external part of Penance is nothing else but an outward token of the sorrow a sinner has conceived for his sin, and a care he takes to edifie the Church whom by his sin he had scandaliz'd, and not at all any satisfaction to the Justice of God, as the Church of *Rome* believes; The Church of *Rome* who hath altogether abolished that which according to her Principles she looks upon as a satisfaction of the Divine Justice, doth justly deserve to be reproached, for having abolished this external part, which cannot with any Justice be laid to the charge of Protestants. The Protestants not regarding the Confession made to the Priest, as a condition without which it is impossible to obtain Remission of Sins, believe that true Contrition without it, is sufficient to reinstate a sinner in Grace. They have for *Guarrantees* of this their opinion, the Apostolical Church, which according to what Fa. *Morinus* himself acknowledges, did not practice those Penances that were in vogue in the 3^d and 4th Century; they have for *Guarrantees* all the Ancient Church, which did not receive a 2^d time to Penance those that relapsed, but refer'd them to the mercy of God, as St. *Austin* expresses it, which would have been the most Cruel thing in the world, if they had believed that the forgiveness of sin did depend upon the absolution of the Priest or Bishop; they are in this of the opinion of those whom *Gratian* speaks of, Q. 3. de Pœnit. dist. 1. from the 1st chap. to the 37th. and whereof he saith, that this opinion was maintained by very learned and godly men, as well as the other which then was entering the Church, about the necessity of Confession to a Priest before cap. 90. But as for the *Roman* Church, which since the Council

of *Trent* holds the absolute necessity of Confession for a thing indubitable, as the *Romish* Correctors have termed it on this chapter of *Gratian*, and which by consequence must look upon the External part of Penance, as the same was regulated by the Ancient Canons, as a true satisfaction, we have just reason to object to her, that of her own private Authority, she has quite overturned the said external part.

The Third Reflection.

When I fairly and honestly owned that Protestants have not retained the external part of Penance, after the manner as it was practis'd in the ancient Church, I did not pretend to grant that the Protestants did ever in the least condemn the Ancient Discipline of the Church. They have been very sensible that that rigor and severity was an imitation of the carriage of the *Jewish* Church; and that it was practic'd in those circumstances, which do not occur in the times wherein we live; they have taken notice, that in process of time, that discipline was almost become barbarous; especially when it began to be accommodated to the savage *Genius* of the *Goths*, *Vandals*, and *Burgundians*. They have well perceived how much the stupidity of the last Ages had altered the notion of it. Indeed nothing can be more ridiculous, than what we read concerning this matter in the Legends of the last Saints: but they have not been wanting to retain that, which did most agree with the design of the Ancient Church in order to humble sinners. The Primitive Church takes notice of the severity of *St. Ambrose* to the Emperor *Theodosius* after the great bloodshed he had caused at *Theſſalonica*: and the Churches of *France* can alledge a like example of the ancient discipline in the person of *Henry iv.* who could not be admitted to the communion of their Churches, till after he had made a publick reparation in the Church of *Rochel*. They have observed the same severity with respect to a great number of other persons of the highest rank, when occasion hath presented; and this discipline has continued amongst them

them until their dissipation: The same discipline in a manner is practic'd in the Church of *Scotland*; and they who are a little vers'd in the History of the past age, cannot be ignorant, that it was not the Prelates of the Church of *England's* fault this same was not revived in their Communion. This Spirit hath always continued amongst them; and tho they have not reestablished it in its ancient rigor we cannot but do them this Justice, that they have preserved all that was essential, in the manner as it was owned by the Apostles and Primitive Christians, which puts them out of the reach of any reproach in this matter.

The Fourth Reflection.

As to that which is the internal and essential part of Penance, it is certain that the Church of *Rome* can object nothing against the Protestants, as to that. They have always maintain'd the ancient belief; that *Contrition* was of absolute necessity in order to be reconciled to God, and to obtain the forgiveness of sin. It was never heard that any of their Doctors taught that *Attrition* was sufficient when join'd with the Sacrament of Penance, that is to say, with Absolution. They have seen the Church of *Rome* adopt this monstrous Error, without imitating the upstart Divinity of those, of whom they have long since been forced to say, *he that is unclean, let him be unclean still*. They have seen, not without being surpriz'd, that if there be yet some *Roman* Divines who defend the opinion of the necessity of *Contrition*, as Doctor *Boileau* Dean of *Sens*, they are fain to abscond their names, and to write without approbation, and to get their Books Printed in *Flanders*, where *Jansenism* still has some credit, whilst in the mean time those of the contrary opinion are in the possession of the Pulpits and Seats of Confession, and of the Consciences of all the Crowned heads of the *Roman* party. The innocence then of the Protestants, gives them right to deplore the Corruption of the Morals of the Directors of the *Roman* Church; it gives them right to look upon those that

that Govern it, as upon men that are not at all concern'd for the salvation of the Souls committed to their care, whom they suffer miserably to be poisoned with the most pernicious doctrine in the world, and most diametrically opposite to the true spirit of repentance, the Gospel prescribes to us, after we have sinned.

The Fifth Reflection.

If the *Jansenists* had had their will, they would have abolished a custom, which the Church of *Rome* has authorised in the Council of *Trent*, about the manner of reconciling Penitents. 'Tis certain, that it is an unheard-of thing in the Ancient Church to admit a man to the Peace of the Church before he had performed the Penance imposed on him; and no persons were dispensed with, but such as were at the point of Death. After all, we find that the contrary custom has been introduc'd into the Church of *Rome*; only by means of the rashness of Confessors, without being authoriz'd by any Law whatsoever. It is certain also that the design of Satisfying would be much more assured, experience telling us, that after such a reconciliation Penitents ordinarily take but little care to perform the Penance imposed on them. This delay of reconciliation was made use of formerly as a curb to restrain the licentiousness of sinners, and would be of the same use still; Humility, which is the Mother of Virtue, being commonly the effect of this delay of reconciliation. Lastly, the Church of *Rome* her self acknowledges that there be some sins, as theft and calumny, which cannot be pardoned without restitution. In the mean time what reception hath the *Romish* Church given to the advice of Mr *Arnaud* and his friends? As they endeavoured to give a check to the Article of frequent Communion used in that Church, tho it be another abuse they were willing to amend, they have been abus'd by them therefore, in the most terrible manner. The Church of *Rome* hath always persever'd

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in this overturning ; before a man has performed his Penance, they absolve him; by which means he is permitted immediately to approach to the Altar ; and it is but too well known, what becomes afterwards of the satisfaction he was to make ; and I am sure that most of the following Confessions contain always an Article about the omission of some formerly imposed Penance : and yet all this hath not been able to perswade the *Romish* Church to restore those ancient rules and customs. Thus she proclaims to all the world the profound respect she hath for Antiquity.

The Sixth Reflection,

I must necessarily add something here concerning those works which the Ancient Church did impose on Penitents ; where we may observe, that the *Romish* Church has wholly altered the notion of those works, as I have shewed before. We might add to this many other abuses. 1. That she imposeth Prayers in an unknown tongue, and consequently doth not require the understanding of them. 2. That she requires very little or no attention at all in repeating them. And above all, in the 3^d place, that she has changed the very nature of those works, by prescribing them as satisfactions to the Divine Justice, and as meritorious works in themselves, which is the most foolish and false Notion that can be put upon them. Now certain it is, that the Protestants have wholly put away this leaven, which has corrupted the practice and belief of the Church of *Rome*. Fasting is prescribed in their Communion as an help to meditation, and to mortifie the flesh ; Alms are order'd by the same, as a token of our love to God, and compassion with the misery of our Neighbour ; Ardent and reiterated Prayers are prescribed to those who have suffered themselves to be carried away by their Passions. And tho they do not fix the number and quantity of these duties, as they of the *Romish* Church do of their Prayers
and

and fasts, yet every one is sensible, that this method, which serves to humble the Conscience, in making it sensible of its sin, if join'd with any attention, is much more proper to recall a sinner to his duty, than the reciting a certain number of Prayers, without either understanding or attention, or to exercise ones self in a seeming fast on certain days, and according to the Judicial order of a Confessor, which we may reject, with a reserve to undergo the said Penance in the flames of Purgatory.

The Seventh Reflection.

The 7th Reflection concerns Indulgences, a means much practic'd of late Ages, the abuse of which gave an occasion to the Reformation. We are not only to observe here the Novelty of this institution, *Gregory vii.* being the first Author of it. And it is well known that when some Schoolmen little vers'd in History, pretended they had found examples of it, in the time of *Gregory i.* and in some Bishops who liv'd before the 11th Century, they have been reproached for their ignorance by *Fa. Morinus de Pœnit. lib. 10. c. 20.* his proofs are so solid on this point, that the Nuncio *Joseph Maria de Seta Felice*, the famous Jesuite *Henschenius*, and the learned *Fa. Le Cointe*, have made use of them as a foundation to refute the Acts of the Canonization of *St. Swibert*, as being manifestly feigned, because therein mention is made of Indulgences, which say they, were never heard of till about the time of *Urban the 2^d.* Successor of *Gregory the vii.* Neither need we to insist on this, That this practice is unknown to all Christians separate from the *Roman* Communion; which yet is a very considerable thing, that the whole *Greek* Church should be absolutely ignorant of this short way of satisfying by Penance. Why did not the *Greek* Bishops make use of the said Compendium as well as the *Latins*? Why hath not the Patriarch of *Constantinople*, who hath always pretended

Le Cointe
Annal Fr.
ad An-
num 805.
Sect. 7.

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to the same right as the Bishop of *Rome*, taken to himself the same power that the Bishop of *Rome* arrogates in this matter over all the Bishops of the *West*? We are to take notice of two things here, which invincibly prove how much this overthrow of Penance hath scandalized the Christians of the *West*, that have given the least heed to it. The first is, that the Bishops of the *West*, perswading themselves that they had right to imitate the Conduct of their Popes *Gregory vii.* and *Urban* the ii. by granting Indulgences to facilitate the Building of stately Churches, many of which have been since built with great ease; *Peter le Chantre*, one of the most famous men of the 13th. Century declares in high terms how much he disapproved this relaxation, the necessary consequence whereof he foresaw could be no other than the total overthrow of Discipline. The Bishop of *Paris*, who had no Means, having undertaken to build that superstructure of the Cathedral of *Paris*, without having any other Fund to carry it on, than by dispensing with the Canonical Penances of those who were willing to contribute towards it, and so buy off their Penances; *Peter le Chantre* in high terms taxed this Novelty, the expressions he makes use of are very remarkable, and alledged by *Fa. Morinus de Pœnit. lib. 10. cap. 20.* We may easily Judge that a man as he was, Would not touch this sore of his own Church but with a great deal of tenderness, tho he could not forbear speaking his mind. we may see the opinion of *William* of *Auxerre* Bishop of *Paris*, *lib. 4. summæ cap. 6. tr. 9.* where he saith on this matter, *Dicimus quod in veritate multa promittunt Prælati, quæ non solvuntur*; that is to say in plain terms, he lookt upon them as pious cheats; which affords us a very plain instance of the Judgment of one of the greatest men of that time, concerning Indulgences. The 2^d thing which merits some consideration, is, That the Treasure of Indulgences, the defence of which *Tho. Aquinas* hath undertaken, did consist in two things, whereof the one is the superabundance of the Satisfactions of Jesus Christ; and the other that of the Saints, who had suffered more than was due

due to Divine Justice. This last Doctrine hath been vigorously attacked by *Durand* of *St. Porcian*, Bishop of *Meaux*, who had been *Penitentiary* of the Pope, and who taught at *Paris* with general Approbation; as we may see in his work on the Sentences, *lib. 4. quest. 20. Artic. 3.* Where he confutes all *Tho. Aquinas* his Arguments, which makes it evident that this Doctrine was only supported by the Credulity of the common People, the Popes immense Authority, the general relaxation of Penance, and by the great Corruption that bore sway then. We find the same care to refute this Doctrine in another famous Schoolman, *viz. Franciscus Mayronis* in *4. dist. 19. q. 2.* both which Divines have attacked the Treasure of Indulgences, and wholly overthrown the foundations thereof. We may also take notice, that the Divine Providence being desirous to procure the Salvation of sinners, so ordered it, that the first Article attack'd by *Luther*, was that of Indulgences, that is to say, one of those whereof the Novelty was most modern, the corruption most palpable, the danger most pressing, and which might most easily be discovered, tho it pretended to a head of Gold, *viz. Apostolical Authority*, to be indeed nothing else but a mixture of Clay and Iron; as retaining nothing but a seeming hardness and severity to serve some temporal Interest, by granting the Remission of sin for money, which is the most vile and shameful thing in the world.

The Eighth Reflection.

The Eighth Reflection we are to make on this Subject, respects Purgatory, which hath always been the grand foundation of Indulgences, and their main support. It might be made out, that this belief is a fruit of *Origenism*. In effect, that which *St. John* of *Damascus* reports of *Gregory I.* (who was one of them that most encouraged this Opinion), That the

the Damned themselves received advantages by Prayers for the Dead, as may be seen by the fable he relates concerning the relief of the soul of *Trajan* the Emperor by means of Prayer; has for a long time past for current Money amongst the *Greek* Fathers. But it shall suffice me to alledge two strange proofs of the ridiculous impression these Pannick Fears made on the spirits of men; the one is, that they had not the same notion of it, which the *Roman* Church hath at this day; this appears from the Legend of *St. Brendan*, who relates the Punishments of certain souls who made satisfaction for the remainder of their Penances in the bodies of some Birds, with which the good *Scotch* Abbot entertained himself; which thing appeared so palpable to Cardinal *de Vitry*, that he could not but make this reflection thereon, *lib. 1. cap. 90.* That which is observable in this Relation, is, That he brings it in upon a recital he makes of cerrain Birds that spoke to *Alexander* the Great, whilst he was in the *Indies*; the words he makes use of are these, *Utrum verum sit aut possibile, prudenti Lectori Judicandum relinquimus.* The other is, that the Pious cheats and frauds of Confessors, has been the main cause of the common perswasion concerning Purgatory: we might establish this truth by a thousand relations, whereof one only shall suffice to mention at present, and that is of *St. Patricks* Purgatory: of which Cardinal *Vitry* speaks thus. *In Hibernia locus quidam*

Lib. 1. c. 92 *habetur, qui Purgatorium Sancti Patricii nuncupatur: si quis illuc ingressus fuerit, nisi vere Pœnitens & contritus fuerit, statim a Dæmonibus raptus aut necatus, nunquam postea revertitur: qui autem vere contritus & confessus ingreditur, per ignem & aquam, & per mille genera tormentorum a dæmonibus correptus ibidem Purgatur: Qui autem amplius deliquit, acerbius in eodem loco punitur. Qui autem a prædicto loco purgatus regreditur, nunquam deinceps ridere potest vel ludere, vel aliqua quæ in mundo sunt diligere, sed semper lugens & gemens, posteriorum oblitus, in anteriora se extendit.* Very unhappily for the *Roman* Church, the Reformation has given occasion to examine this Mystery, and what dis-

discovery hath been thereupon made, is very well known : as also how many like Fables have been made use of in some former Ages to abuse the poor people in matters of Religion.

I think this is sufficient to make appear, that the Church of *Rome* in her whole conduct hath not forgot to make use of any means to support the Right she arrogates to her self, of overthrowing, upon divers made pretences, whatsoever the Ancient Church had most wisely established, to make sin odious; to inspire men with an eternal horror for it, and to retain sinners in a Just fear of the Judgments of God.

FINIS.



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